GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1650
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2015
Haj Accidents
Reddy Shri Mekapati Rajamohan;Reddy Shri Midhun;Reddy,Kotha Prabhakar;Sundaram Shri P.R.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the recent incidents of crane crash and stampede during Haj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia in which a large number of Indians have also lost their lives;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the details of medical and other arrangements in place to take care of such an eventuality;

(c) whether sufficient medical and other facilities were provided to the victims;

(d) if so, the details along with the compensation paid, if any, to the victims by the Government as well as Saudi authorities; and

(e) if not, the reasons for delay in the matter?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) Yes. Due to a heavy storm in Makkah Region, a crane accident occurred on 11.09.2015 in Haram Sharief. In this accident, 13 Indian pilgrims died and 19 pilgrims were injured. A stampede occurred in Mina on 24 September, 2015 in which 120 Indian pilgrims died, 51 were injured and 3 are reported to be missing.

Government of India attaches high priority to Haj pilgrimage. Ministry of External Affairs coordinates arrangements for Haj pilgrimage in consultation with the Haj Committee of India and the Consulate General of India, Jeddah. Every year, Ministry of External Affairs sends deputationists (Coordinators, Assistant Haj Officers, Haj Assistants, Doctors and Paramedical staff) for rendering assistance to the Haj pilgrims. Every year, Consulate General of India, Jeddah arranges for temporary tents in Mina, sets up dispensaries and branch Haj Offices in Makkah & Madinah, provides medicines, ambulances, other local transport etc. for the Haj pilgrims.

For Haj 2015, Consulate General of India, Jeddah established main offices in Makkah and Madinah, 13 branch offices in Makkah, 3 branch offices in Madinah, offices with dispensaries at Jeddah and Madinah Haj Terminals, a 40-bedded hospital in Makkah, a 40-bedded hospital in Azizia region of Makkah, 13 branch dispensaries in Makkah, a 10-bedded main dispensary in Madinah and 3 branch dispensaries in Madinah. Ministry of External Affairs deputed 145 Doctors and 149 Paramedical staff during Haj 2015. Medicines and medical equipment worth Rs. 1.76 crores were also sent by Ministry of External Affairs to Consulate General of India, Jeddah for pilgrims during Haj 2015.

(c) Yes. For the Makkah Crane Accident, to provide information to the relatives about the Hajis and to assist the families of Indians who were affected a full fledged 24 X 7 Control Room along with helpline and toll free number was immediately set up in Indian Haj Pilgrims Office, Makkah. Teams of Doctors and Officers were immediately deployed in all Government hospitals in Makkah to monitor the health condition of the injured and to find missing pilgrims. Teams of Doctors and Officers were also deputed to visit Mina mortuary to identify the deceased Indian Hajis.

For the Mina stampede, a full fledged 24x7 Control Room along with helpline and toll free number was immediately set up in Indian Haj office Camp, Mina. Teams of Doctors and Officers were immediately deployed in all Government hospitals in Mina, Makkah and Jeddah to monitor the health condition of the injured and to find missing pilgrims. Teams of Doctors and Officers were also deputed to visit Mina mortuary to identify the deceased Indian Hajis.

As a follow up, for both the accidents, officials also regularly visited hospitals where Indian Hajis were admitted. They visited Mina mortuary to follow up on the burial formalities of the deceased. Officials of Health Ministry, Haj Ministry and Interior Ministry of Saudi Arabia were regularly approached to obtain information regarding the missing Hajis. Regular updates for both the accidents were uploaded pertaining to dead/injured/missing Hajis on websites of MEA, CGI, Jeddah. Indian Haj Mission's whatsapp was also extensively used to provide information to the relatives of the victim.

(d) & (e) For the Makkah Crane accident, Government of Saudi Arabia had announced a compensation of Saudi Riyal 1 million to be paid to the family of each pilgrim killed in the accident, Saudi Riyal 1 million to those pilgrims whose injuries resulted in permanent disability and Saudi Riyal 500,000 for each of the seriously injured pilgrims. However, as on date, Saudi authorities have not started the process of disbursement of compensation. No compensation has been announced by the Government of Saudi Arabia for the

Mina Stampede.

Government of India has not paid any compensation to the victims of the accidents. However, every Haj pilgrim going through Haj Committee of India is insured under Group Accident Compensation Scheme of Haj Committee of India. Private Tour Operators also insure the pilgrims and provide compensation in such cases as per their compensation policy.